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ABSTRACT

The paradigm presented in this chapter is predicated on certain assumptions about the future of schools and schooling as well as the role of the school counselor. These assumptions include: the cultural and demographic profile of school counselors will continue to be different from students; the counselor will have an ever-present role on school leadership teams; although the traditional high school will continue, alternative programs will proliferate; and the counselor will have career, personal, and civic functions, and the cultural proficiency model will be inextricably linked with these functions. Through a successful diversity program, counselors will play an ever-important role in improving staff and student morale by improving the effectiveness of communication, reducing complaints, and creating a more comfortable and pleasing climate for persons in the school. As educational leaders, counselors will learn concepts and skills that can be translated into new initiatives, curricula, programs, and activities that will enrich school life for all students and staff. It is proposed that diversity programs provide information and skills needed to help improve the quality of life for school and home communities. (GCP)

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The Counselor as a Member of a Culturally Proficient School Leadership Team

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The Counselor as a Member of a Culturally Proficient School Leadership Team

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The paradigm presented in this chapter is predicated on certain assumptions about the future of schools and schooling as well as the role of the school counselor (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999):

- The cultural and demographic profile of school counselors will continue to be different from the profile of students. In California, 80% of educators are White, but the statewide profile of students of color is higher than 50%. In urban areas, the proportion of students of color is even higher.
- The role of the counselor will evolve so that a larger portion of time will be devoted to coaching teachers, administrators, students, and families on guidance-relevant matters. The counselor will have an ever-present role in school leadership teams.
- The traditional comprehensive high school will continue; however, alternative programs will proliferate. The cultural proficiency model presented in this chapter will work in either setting.
- The counselor will have career, personal, and civic functions, and the cultural proficiency model will be inextricably interlinked with these functions.

Through a successful diversity program, counselors will play an ever-important role in improving staff and student morale by improving the effectiveness of communication, reducing complaints, and creating a more comfortable and pleasing climate for persons in the school. As educational leaders,

counselors, along with other members of the school leadership team, will learn concepts and skills that can be translated into new initiatives, curricula, programs, and activities that will enrich school life for all students and staff. As greater awareness and understanding develops in schools, so, too, will grow awareness and understanding of the larger community. We believe that very few of us actually intend to hurt other people. Diversity programs provide all of us with the information and skills we need to help us avoid unintentional slights or hurts and to improve the quality of life for our school and home communities.

Cultural Proficiency: What Can It Be?

Clearly, counseling educators need some means of addressing cultural diversity. As the United States continues into the twenty-first century, the need for addressing issues of diversity is going to grow. In our experience, the most effective and productive approach to addressing cultural diversity within schools is a model known as *cultural proficiency.* In a culturally proficient school, the educators and students will know they are valued, and they will involve community members in the school to facilitate their own cultural understanding. The culture of the school will promote inclusiveness and will institutionalize processes for learning about differences and for responding appropriately to differences. Rather than lamenting, "Why can't *they* be like *us*?" teachers and students will welcome and create opportunities to better understand who they are as individuals, while learning how to interact positively with people who differ from themselves.

The cultural proficiency model uses an inside-out approach, which focuses first on those of us who are insiders to the school, encouraging us to reflect on our own individual understandings and values. It thereby relieves those identified as outsiders, the members of historically excluded and new groups, from the responsibility of doing all the adapting. The cultural proficiency approach to diversity surprises many people who expect a diversity program to teach them about other people, not about themselves. This inside-out approach acknowledges and validates the current values and feelings of people, encouraging change without threatening people's feelings of worth.

The cultural proficiency approach prizes individuals but focuses chiefly on the school's culture, which has a life force beyond the individuals within the school. This focus removes

the need to place blame on individuals or to induce feelings of guilt. The process is to involve all members of the school community in determining how to align policies, practices, and procedures in order to achieve cultural proficiency. Because all of the participants will be deeply involved in the developmental process, there will be a broader base of ownership, making it easier to commit to change. This approach attacks at a systemic level the problems that often arise from the diversification of students, faculty, and staff.

Building cultural proficiency will require informed and dedicated faculty and staff, committed and involved leadership, and time. Counselors and other educators cannot be sent to training for two days and be expected to return with solutions to all of the equity issues in their school. For instance, this model does *not* involve the use of simple checklists for identifying culturally significant characteristics of individuals, which may be politically appropriate, but is socially and educationally meaningless. The transformation to cultural proficiency requires time to think, reflect, assess, decide, and change. To become culturally proficient, educators must participate actively in work sessions, contributing their distinctive ideas, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions. Consequently, their contributions will involve them deeply in the process and make it easier for them to commit to change.

What Are the Points on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum?

Cultural proficiency represents either the policies, practices, and procedures of a school, or the values and behaviors of an individual, which will enable that school or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment. Cultural proficiency will be reflected in the way a school treats its faculty and staff, its students, and its surrounding community. The culturally proficient person will not claim to—or perhaps even attempt to—know everything there is to know about all cultural groups. Rather, a culturally proficient person will know how to learn about cultures and respond effectively to specific groups and situations.

Cultural proficiency is the endpoint on a continuum, the point at which educators and the school environment will optimally facilitate effective cross-cultural interaction. There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum, which

indicate unique ways of seeing and responding to differences (see figure 1). The points on the cultural proficiency continuum reflect a progression for dealing with persons who are different, which schools have tended to follow.

Figure 1. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Cultural destructiveness	Cultural blindness	Cultural competence	
Cultural incapacity	Cultural precompetence	Cultural proficiency	

The continuum provides a perspective for examining policies, practices, and procedures in a school by giving reference points and a common language for describing historical or current situations. For instance, it is easy to apply the cultural proficiency continuum to events that have resulted in people being murdered, maimed, or exploited by dominant and destructive groups. More subtle outcomes, however, may be more difficult to categorize. Therefore, educators will need various opportunities to practice using the continuum in order to identify how students' opportunities have been preempted, denied, limited, or enhanced.

As you read the following section, view the continuum using two trains of thought. First, read the material, creating your own illustrations of how groups of people have been affected at various times in history. Second, use the continuum to learn to examine how students have been—and are currently being—affected by practices in your school that either limit or enhance their opportunities.

Cultural Destructiveness

The easiest to detect and the most negative end of the continuum *(cultural destructiveness)* is represented by attitudes, policies, and practices destructive to cultures and consequently to the individuals within the culture. Extreme examples include cultural genocide, such as the U.S. system of enslaving African captives and the North American westward expansion that resulted in the near extinction of many Native American nations. Other examples of cultural destructiveness are the many Bureau of Indian Affairs educational programs that took young people from their families and tribes and placed them in boarding

schools—where the goal was to eradicate their language and culture—and the mass exterminations of many peoples that have occurred throughout the twentieth century. The twentieth century has been witness to the Nazi extermination of Jews, Gypsies, gay men, and lesbians, as well as others viewed as less than desirable by occupying forces. Other destructive acts have included the pogroms of Russia, the Turkish extermination of Armenians, the killing fields of Southeast Asia, and the "ethnic cleansing" that occurred in the Hutu–Tutsi wars of central Africa and in the former Yugoslav Republic.

Elementary and high schools historically have been places where students were socialized to become U.S. citizens and to learn basic skills for functioning in the workplace. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this process of acculturation involved socializing people from all parts of Europe into an emerging dominant Anglo culture. This melting-pot approach to public school education was seen by some as relatively effective within two to three generations for the European immigrants. Over the past 50 years, compulsory attendance requirements have brought into schools increasing numbers of Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants from Southeast Asia, and indigenous European Americans from low socioeconomic groups. There are no indications of this trend reversing. Although members of these groups have had striking successes in education, their acquisition of English proficiency and middle-class mores did not necessarily ensure their access either to higher education or to middle-class lifestyles. The cultural destructiveness that these groups experienced in schools often resulted in markedly lower achievement, higher dropout rates, and lower social mobility. Specific examples of cultural destructiveness in schools have included:

- "English only" policies and the elimination of bilingual education programs so that children are essentially prohibited from using their native language at school, and
- policies that provide no acceptable options for girls who must not wear shorts or who must cover their heads at all times because their culture dictates a modest dress code.

Cultural Incapacity

Another point on the continuum *(cultural incapacity)*

describes a school or individuals who show extreme bias, believe in the superiority of the dominant group, and assume a paternal posture toward so-called lesser groups. These systems or individuals are often characterized by ignorance, as well as by either a dislike or an unrealistic fear of people who differ from the dominant group. Cultural incapacity virtually guarantees limited opportunities and can lead to *learned helplessness*, people's belief that they are powerless to help themselves because of their repeated experiences of powerlessness.

Historical examples include restrictive immigration laws targeting Asians and Pacific Islanders (such as the Oriental Exclusion Acts) and the Jim Crow laws, which denied African Americans basic human rights. Other examples include discriminatory hiring practices, generally lower expectations of performance for minority-group members, and subtle messages to people who are not members of the dominant group, conveying that they are not valued or welcomed. Specific examples of cultural incapacity in schools have included:

- assuming that all African American families experience poverty,
- believing that it is inherently better to be heterosexual than homosexual,
- announcing that a new Latina has been hired to be a role model for Latinas, without recognizing that all children can benefit from having role models from their own and other cultural groups.

Cultural Blindness

The third point is the most vexing point on the continuum. *Cultural blindness* is the belief that color and culture make no difference and that all people are the same. For many educators, that is the goal of a diversity program. The values and behaviors of the dominant culture are presumed to be universally applicable and beneficial. The intention of the culturally blind educator is to avoid discriminating—that is, to avoid making an issue of the differences manifested among the students. Culturally blind educators have too often viewed students' cultural differences to be indications of disobedience, noncompliance, or other deficiency. They assume that members of minority cultures do not meet the cultural expectations of the dominant group because they lack either the cultural traditions of the dominant culture (i.e., they're culturally deficient) or the desire to achieve (i.e., they're morally deficient). In reality, the

system works only for the most highly assimilated minority groups. As a result of many educators' blindness to the differences among students, too many students are left feeling discounted or invisible in school.

In our conversations with educators who prize their own cultural blindness, they are always painfully unaware of how their behavior affects their students. When confronted with the inappropriateness of cultural blindness, they initially retreat into the defensive position that they never intended to discriminate. It is difficult for good people who are committed to fairness to believe that they sometimes hurt their students. It is important not to focus on intentions, but to become aware of the impact that educator behavior can have on students.

Counselors need to recognize that students from nondominant groups view their differences as important aspects of their identity. Their differences also affect how they are viewed both within their respective communities and in the larger society. These counselors are surprised to learn that Black children would not choose to be anything other than Black, that Cambodian children are proud of their language, and that the child in the wheelchair does not feel disadvantaged. Culturally proficient educators are aware of the importance of their students' cultures, the impact of students' experiences with cultural epithets, and the invisibility of many students in much of the school curricula.

Culturally blind counselors and other educators may teach that Abraham Lincoln is a hero to all African Americans, assume that Cinco de Mayo is a Latin American holiday, and believe that girls are predisposed toward the arts rather than the sciences.

Other examples of cultural blindness in schools include

- leadership training that fails to address issues of diversity
- lack of awareness that each school has its own unique culture and that each group experiences it differently
- inability or failure to articulate the school's cultural expectations to all students, staff, and faculty members

Cultural Precompetence

Cultural precompetence is an awareness of limitations in cross-cultural communication and outreach. While the culturally precompetent person wants to provide fair and equitable treatment with appropriate cultural sensitivity, this desire is accompanied by the frustration of not knowing exactly what is

possible or how to proceed. An example is the belief that the accomplishment of a single goal or activity fulfills any perceived obligation toward minority groups; as a result, culturally precompetent educators will point with pride to the hiring of one disabled person, or the serving of a soul food meal during Black History month, as proof of a school's cultural proficiency. Other examples include:

- recruiting members of underrepresented groups but not providing them support or making any adaptation to the differences they bring to the workplace;
- dismissing as overly sensitive anyone who complains about culturally inappropriate comments;
- failing to hold accountable any members of minority groups who are not performing well; and
- making rules against hate speech instead of having a curriculum that teaches the cherishing of history, cultures, and languages that are different.

Cultural Competence

At the point of *cultural competence,* schools and counselors and other educators will accept and respect differences, carefully attend to the dynamics of difference, continually assess their own cultural knowledge and beliefs, continuously expand their cultural knowledge and resources, and make various adaptations of their own belief systems, policies, and practices. This is the first point on the continuum that fully addresses the needs of diverse student populations. Culturally competent educators will:

- incorporate culturally appropriate behavior in performance appraisals;
- model culturally inclusive behaviors (e.g., learning to speak Spanish in a predominantly Latino community);
- speak on issues facing handicapped persons, gay men, and lesbians, even when the individuals themselves are not visibly present;
- advocate for changes in policies, practices, and procedures throughout the school and community;
- teach communication strategies that lead to understanding of other people's views; and
- teach cultural variables in conflict resolution.

Cultural Proficiency

Cultural proficiency is more than the esteeming of culture.

Whereas culturally competent counselors and other educators will function effectively in several different cultural contexts, the culturally proficient counselor will know how to learn about culture. Confronted with the challenges of a new cultural setting, culturally proficient counselors will know how to find out what they need to know in a nonoffensive manner. The culturally proficient leader will seek to add to the knowledge base of culturally proficient practices by conducting research, developing new approaches based on culture, and taking every available opportunity to formally and informally increase the awareness level and knowledge base of others about culture and about the dynamics of difference. Culturally proficient leaders will:

- unabashedly advocate for culturally proficient practices in all arenas;
- actively interact with the larger school community by visiting families and providing communities with information and resources that will insure inclusion for student and school life;
- help to develop curriculum based on what is known about multiple intelligences;
- take advantage of teachable moments to learn of and teach their colleagues about culturally proficient practices.

What Is Culturally Proficient Behavior?

The cultural proficiency continuum takes a broad look at the range of behaviors and attitudes that address the issues of diversity. This section describes the specific behaviors that need to be present within your school and yourself, as a counselor or other educator, for you and your school to be culturally proficient. We call these behaviors the five essential elements of cultural proficiency: (a) value diversity; (b) assess your culture; (c) manage the dynamics of difference; (d) institutionalize cultural knowledge; and (e) adapt to diversity (see figure 2).

Value Diversity

As a culturally proficient counselor, you will be proactive in involving a wide variety of people from all areas of the school. You will demonstrate that you value diversity by openly addressing the need to effectively serve all persons who are different, and you will accept that cultures vary, evoking different feelings and behaviors. You will be actively engaged as a member

Figure 2. The Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency

1. Value Diversity: *Name the Differences*

- Celebrate and encourage the presence of a variety of peoples in all activities.
- Recognize difference as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment.
- Accept that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others.

2. Assess Your Culture: *Claim Your Identity*

- Describe your own culture and the cultural norms of your organization.
- Recognize how your culture affects others.
- Understand how the culture of your organization affects those whose culture is different.

3. Manage the Dynamics of Difference: *Frame the Conflicts*

- Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict among people whose cultural backgrounds and values may be different from yours.
- Understand the effect that historical distrust has on present day interactions.
- Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations.

4. Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge: *Train about Diversity*

- Integrate into systems for staff development and education information and skills that enable everyone to interact effectively in a variety of cross-cultural situations.
- Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization.
- Teach origins of stereotypes and prejudices.

5. Adapt to Diversity: *Change for Diversity*

- Change past ways of doing things to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, students, and community.
- Develop cross-cultural communication skills.
- Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference.

of the school community and viewed as a respected school leader. As a culturally proficient school counselor and community leader, you will provide leadership in developing policy statements on diversity or ensuring that the school's and district's missions and goal statements include the concept of diversity. You will take these statements and act on them by communicating inclusion to marginalized groups and by directing human and financial resources into curriculum, training, and other school endeavors to proactively address diversity.

As a culturally proficient school leader, you will celebrate and encourage value for diversity in all activities by:

- ensuring that all stakeholders in the school community are involved in the process;
- recognizing difference as diversity rather than as inappropriate responses to the school setting;
- accepting that each culture finds some values and behavior more important than other values and behavior.

Assess Your Culture

To assess your culture, you will analyze yourself and your environment so that you will have a palpable sense of your own culture and the culture of your school. The purpose of assessing your culture directly relates to the inside-out approach of the cultural proficiency model. For example, as a culturally proficient educator, you will start with yourself and your own school. You will not assume that everyone will share your values, nor will you assume that everyone knows what behaviors are expected and affirmed in a culturally proficient school; in fact, most persons will be simply unaware. Therefore, you will understand how the culture of your school and district affects those whose culture is different. You will state and explain the cultural norms of each classroom, school, or district so that people whose cultural norms differ will know how they must adapt to the new environment. By recognizing how the school's culture affects other people, you will gain the data you need to make adjustments in style or processes so that all people feel comfortable and welcomed. As a culturally proficient leader, you will:

- understand how the culture of your school affects those whose culture is different;
- describe you own culture and the cultural norms of your school;

- recognize how your school's culture affects others.

Manage the Dynamics of Difference

A school that values diversity will not be without conflict. As a culturally proficient counselor, you will acknowledge that conflict is a natural state of affairs, and you will develop effective, culturally proficient strategies for managing the conflict that occurs. Your skills will be put to use by counseling and coaching individual students as well as groups of students, parents, and educators. Once you have embraced the value of diversity and have begun to articulate the cultural expectations of your school or classroom, the differences among the school's community members will be more apparent. You will be ready for this situation by providing an opportunity for everyone in the school community to learn effective strategies for resolving conflict among people whose backgrounds differ. As a leader, you will provide training sessions and facilitate group discussions so that people will understand the effect of historical distrust on present day interactions. You will realize that the actions of others may be misjudged based on learned expectations, and you will implement programs and processes that create new cultural expectations for the culturally proficient community. As a culturally proficient leader, you will:

- learn effective strategies for resolving conflict among people whose cultural backgrounds and values may differ from yours;
- understand how historical distrust affects present day interactions;
- realize that you may misjudge other people's actions based on learned expectations.

Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge

As a culturally proficient school leader, you will prize ongoing staff development that promotes a commitment to lifelong learning. You will clearly understand that information and technology continue to evolve at an ever-quickening pace, thereby dictating the need for continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills. Similarly, as our society continues increasingly to appreciate its multicultural nature and its intimate interconnections with the wider world, you will recognize the increasing importance of cultural proficiency. You will readily integrate into systems of staff development and education the information and skills that enable educators and students to interact effectively in a variety of cross-cultural situations. You

will affirm the importance of cultural knowledge, not only for the climate of the school or district, but also as a knowledge base on which all students will continue to build throughout their lives.

As a culturally proficient leader, you will realize that students need knowledge about the cultural practices of different people and groups, the experiences that many of these people and groups have had with stereotyping and prejudices, and how stereotypes are developed and maintained in society. You will help students and colleagues to develop skills for eliminating prejudices through various human interactions, curricula, and instructional programs in schools. As a culturally proficient leader, you will:

- integrate into the educational system the information and skills needed for effective interaction in a variety of cross-cultural situations;
- incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the school;
- take advantage of evolving classroom interactions that arise related to issues of differences, and use those teachable moments and other opportunities to learn from or to teach to one another.

Adapt to Diversity

To understand adversity you need to understand that all of us are constantly undergoing change. In traditional approaches to diversity, such as throwing everyone into the melting pot, the groups that were not a part of the dominant culture were expected to change and to adapt to the culture of the dominant group. The culturally proficient approach to diversity invites and encourages everyone to change. Once you make the commitment to cultural proficiency, you will help all aspects of the school community to adapt. You will help the host groups change by becoming more conscious of cultural norms that deny the value of diversity and the goal of cultural proficiency. You will encourage the newer or less dominant groups to change because they will know clearly the cultural expectations of the school. You will enable the school or district to change by using culturally proficient behaviors as the standards for performance appraisal and as the basis for analyzing and revising school and district policies. As a culturally proficient leader, you will:

- change the way things are done by acknowledging the differences that are present in the faculty, staff, students, and community;

- examine policies and practices that may convey benign discrimination;
- institutionalize cultural interventions that address the conflict and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference.

What Are the Principles That Guide Culturally Proficient Practice?

By deliberately and systematically implementing the behavior outlined in the preceding five essential elements of cultural proficiency, you will achieve cultural proficiency for yourself and for your school. To carry out this ambitious task, you will need a firm value base. With such a base, you will transform a daunting challenge into an opportunity that brings all people together to create a culturally proficient school community. The cultural proficiency model includes five principles that may help to guide you as you work toward cultural proficiency (see figure 3). This section describes the guiding principles.

Culture Is Ever Present

Your culture is a defining aspect of your humanity. It is the predominant force in shaping values and behaviors. Occasionally, you may be inclined to take offense at behaviors that differ from yours, but as a culturally proficient leader, you will remind yourself that offensive behavior may not be personal; it may be cultural. You will recognize that members of so-called minority populations have to be at least bicultural, and this creates its own set of issues, problems, and possible conflicts. All people who are not part of the dominant group have already gained competence in one culture before they began to learn standard English or dominant U.S. cultural norms. Therefore, when members of nondominant cultures resist or hesitate in using the language or cultural norms of the dominant culture, they are not necessarily ignorant or incompetent; rather, they may be simply using language or cultural behaviors with which they are more familiar or more comfortable.

Culturally proficient counselors and other educators will recognize that what they experience as normal or regular is part of their culture. This may tempt them to feel a sense of entitlement, but by recognizing these feelings, they will then acknowledge and appreciate the subtle cultural differences

among members of the dominant culture. Rarely do European Americans experience the process of acquiring another language or a new set of values, norms, or behaviors. They also less seldom need to seek appropriate and accepted places for using their first language and culture. This lack of experience often leads to misunderstanding and an ignorance of what it means to be perceived as different on a day-by-day basis. It also insulates members of the dominant culture from the negative judgments ascribed to people because of their linguistic and cultural differences. As we come to understand, somehow, the reality of exclusion experienced by members of minority groups, then it will become possible to turn such understanding into a value of diversity.

Figure 3. The Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency

Culture Is Ever Present
Acknowledge culture as a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions. Although you may be inclined to take offense at behaviors that differ from yours, remind yourself that it may not be personal; it may be cultural.

People Are Served to Varying Degrees by the Dominant Culture
What works well in organizations and in the community for you, and others who are like you, may work against members of other cultural groups. Failure to make such an acknowledgment puts the burden for change on one group.

People Have Group Identities and Personal Identities
Although it is important to treat all people as individuals, it is also important to acknowledge the group identity of individuals. Actions must be taken with the awareness that the dignity of a person is not guaranteed unless the dignity of his or her people is also preserved.

Diversity within Cultures Is Important
Because diversity within cultures is as important as diversity between cultures, it is important to learn about cultural groups not as monoliths, such as Asians, Hispanics, Gay Men and Women, but as the complex and diverse groups that they are. Often, because of the class differences in the United States, there will be more in common across cultural lines than within them.

Each Group Has Unique Cultural Needs
Each cultural group has unique needs that cannot be met within the boundaries of the dominant culture. Expressions of one group's cultural identity do not imply a disrespect for yours. Make room in your organization for several paths that lead to the same goal.

People Are Served to Varying Degrees by the Dominant Culture

Culturally proficient counselors and other educators will adjust their behaviors and values to accommodate the full range of diversity represented by their school populations. They will recognize that some individuals from minority cultures find success in varying degrees in schools where only the dominant culture may profit from such a setting. Some members of some nondominant groups may do well despite such a setting, but many other students and educators may find such an atmosphere stifling and limiting. Such an imbalance of power puts the total burden for change on one person or group. Culturally proficient leaders will see the need to ensure that the responsibility for change is shared by members of dominant groups, historically oppressed groups, and new cultural groups.

People Have Group Identities and Personal Identities

It will continue to be important to treat all people as individuals, as well as to acknowledge each group's identity. It demeans and insults individuals and their cultures to single out particularly assimilated members of ethnic groups and to tell them that they differ from members of their own group, implying that being different somehow makes them better, or more acceptable, in the eyes of the dominant group. Culturally proficient leaders know that to guarantee the dignity of each person, they must also preserve the dignity of each person's culture.

Often, so-called personality problems are actually problems of cultural differences. Culturally proficient leaders address these problems. They will recognize that cultural differences in thought patterns (e.g., those of non-Western, non-European people versus those of Westerners) reflect differing but equally valid ways of viewing and solving problems. No cultural group will appear to use just one approach exclusively for processing information and solving problems, although some cultures will be traditionally associated with one approach more than others. One approach will not be held to be superior to the other across all situations. Culturally proficient leaders will recognize these and other cultural differences, and they will use this knowledge to promote effective communication among diverse people.

Diversity within Cultures Is Important

Because diversity within cultures is as important as diversity

between cultures, it will be increasingly important to learn about ethnic groups not as monoliths (e.g., Asians, Latinos, or Whites), but as the complex and diverse groups we will continue to be. Within each major ethnic group are many distinct subgroups. Often, because of the class differences in the United States, there will be more in common across ethnic lines than within them. For example, upper-middle-class U.S. citizens of European, African, and Japanese descent will be more likely to share values and a similar worldview than will members of any one ethnic group who come from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, from working class to upper class. Culturally proficient schools will recognize these intracultural differences and will provide their faculty, staff, students, and parents with access to information about people who are not like themselves in various ways. These schools will create an environment that fosters trust, safety, and enhancement of self for the people who work and learn in them.

Each Group Has Unique Cultural Needs

European Americans have been able assume that a public school in this country will have information about the history and culture of their people in the United States, as well as about their countries of origin. Other U.S. citizens and U.S. immigrants cannot make such assumptions. The culturally proficient educator will teach and encourage colleagues who are members of the dominant culture to make the necessary adaptations in how schools provide educational services, so that all people will have access to the same benefits and privileges as members of the dominant group in society. The culturally proficient counselor will be instrumental in creating these settings.

One of the barriers to cultural proficiency is lack of awareness of the need to adapt. The first step toward removing that barrier will be to recognize that highlighting the aspects of all people represented in the community enhances the capacity of everyone. As educators in a school try to develop their cultural proficiency by increasing their value for diversity, assessing the school's culture, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge, they will increase people's awareness of the need to adapt, as well as people's respect for the unique cultural needs of diverse populations.

Concluding Comments

It can be argued that the purpose of schools and schooling will continue to be debated throughout much of this century.

Twenty years from now we may still be unsettled over whether the purpose of schools is to create a literate citizenry for a democratic society or to mold and shape workers and employees for the unknown jobs and careers of the future. We view these points of view as worthy of discussion but too often dead-ended into false dichotomies. It is our belief that we can do both. The use of the cultural proficiency model is one way to do this. This model recognizes the basic value of humanity and equips educators with the knowledge and skills to educate all children and youth. Counselors and other educational leaders are faced with challenges and opportunities to transform the schools of today into schools for the future. By actively implementing policies, practices, and procedures that value, include, and engage all members of school communities, educators will embrace the responsibilities and opportunities for educating all learners.

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About the Authors

Randall B. Lindsey teaches in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University and has a practice centered on educational consulting on issues related to diversity. He has served as a junior high school and high school teacher, as an administrator in charge of school desegregation efforts, as executive director of a nonprofit corporation, and recently as chair of the Education Department at the University of Redlands. Prior to that he served for seventeen years at California State University, Los Angeles, in the Division of Administration and Counseling. His Ph.D. is in educational leadership from Georgia State University, his M.A. in teaching is in history education from the University of Illinois. All of Randy's experiences have been in working with diverse populations and his area of study is the behavior of White people in multicultural settings. Randy serves as a consultant and facilitator on issues related to diversity and equity, as well as on topics of leadership, problem solving, long-range planning, and

conflict resolution. With co-authors Kikanza Nuri Robins and Raymond Terrell, he recently published *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders. Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach* (with Kikanza Nuri Robins, Delores B. Lindsey, and Raymond D. Terrell) in August 2001.

Kikanza Nuri Robins has been interested in language, culture, and learning her entire life. She has addressed these interests professionally through her work as an organizational development consultant. Over the past twenty-five years, Dr. Nuri Robins has focused on working with a variety of not-for-profit organizations in health, education, criminal justice, and religion, helping them with such issues as strategic planning, conflict resolution, and cultural competence. Her clients range from the New York Public Schools and Marriage Encounter to the National AIDS Fund and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. She is a trustee of the San Francisco Theological Seminary and serves on the board of the Southern California Foster Family Agency. She is an avid designer, a talented seamstress, and the author of many articles and two books: *Unspoken Visions* and *Cultural Proficiency.*

Delores Lindsey earned her Ph.D. in educational leadership from the Claremont Graduate University. She believes that the culture of an organization or team is best reflected by the language and stories used within the organization. She captures many of these stories in her writing and speaking. As director of the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA) in Orange County, California, Delores leads and coaches organizations using "strategic visioning," team development strategies, and leadership standards for excellence. Drawing from her Southern heritage, Delores shares her personal stories as a student, classroom teacher, middle school principal, and staff developer. Audiences and workshop participants appreciate her refreshing look at life within an organization as reflected in the stories and language of its members.